

7 STEPS to effectively referring your patients in *Philadelphia and surrounding Pennsylvania counties* to the Early Intervention and Special Education Systems

1. Identify a child with possible Early Intervention/ Special Education Needs.
2. Speak with the family/raise your developmental concerns for the child and try to find out if the family has similar concerns.
3. Schedule the child to return and administer developmental screening tools (e.g. Ages and Stages Questionnaire/ PEDS/ M:CHAT), if necessary.

✓ Eligibility criteria for **Early Intervention services for children between birth through age 2** (eligibility is determined by a multidisciplinary evaluation of the child arranged for by ChildLink in Philadelphia County and by the County Office of Mental Health/Mental Retardation in other counties)

- Child exhibits a **developmental delay**, meaning child has 25% or more delay in 1 or more areas of development (communication, cognition, adaptive skills, social and emotional, and/or physical development (including vision and/or hearing) or tests review 1.5 standard deviation below the norm on accepted or recognized standardized tests for infants and toddlers); **OR**
- Child has been diagnosed with physical/mental condition with a **high probability of developmental delay** (e.g. Fetal alcohol syndrome, FTT, Down Syndrome); **OR**
- Child is identified with a developmental delay based on **Informed Clinical Opinion** (Clinical Judgment) that makes use of qualitative and quantitative information to assist in forming a determination regarding difficult-to-measure aspects of current developmental status and the potential need for early intervention.

✓ Eligibility criteria for **Early Intervention services for children age 3 through age 5** (eligibility is determined by a multidisciplinary evaluation conducted by Elwyn in Philadelphia and in the City of Chester and by the local Intermediate Unit in other counties)

- Child has a “disability” (developmental delay, intellectual disability, hearing impairment, speech or language impairment, visual impairment, serious emotional disturbance, autism, orthopedic impairment, TBI, other health impairment, specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities)
- **AND**
- As a result of that “disability,” the child requires special education service (defined as specially designed instruction to meet the child’s unique needs).

✓ Eligibility criteria for **Special Education services for children from age 5 through age 21** (eligibility is determined by a multidisciplinary evaluation conducted by the child’s school district, or local Intermediate Unit if the child is in a private school)

- Child has a “disability” (intellectual disability, hearing impairment, speech or language impairment, visual impairment, serious emotional disturbance, autism, orthopedic impairment, TBI, other health impairment, specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities);
 - **AND**
 - As a result of that “disability,” the child requires special education service (defined as specially designed instruction to meet the child’s unique needs).
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4. Refer the family for evaluation of child by Early Intervention/Special Education Systems (also see advocacy support resource list on last page)
 - a) For Early Intervention: Birth through age 2:
 - If the child lives in **Philadelphia County**: Complete **CHILDLINK referral** – found on www.CAP4kids.org, and send it to CHILDLINK;
 - If the child lives in another county: Provide family with the **CONNECT helpline at 1-800-692-7288**. The **CONNECT Helpline staff will refer a family to the appropriate local Early Intervention agency (which will generally be the local County Office of Mental Health/Mental Retardation)**.
 - b) For Early Intervention: Ages 3 through 5:
 - If the child lives in **Philadelphia County** or in the city of **Chester**:
The agency responsible for evaluating preschool-age children for EI services is Elwyn. Elwyn can be reached at 215-222-8054 for parent/ professional intake phone calls (Philadelphia) or 610-872-4590 (Chester).
 - If the child lives in **another county**: In most other counties, the local **Intermediate Unit** (an IU is a regional educational service provider) is the agency responsible for evaluating preschool-age children for EI services. A list of Intermediate Units and contact numbers can be found at <http://www.paiu.org/paiucontacts.html>
 - c) For Special Education: Ages 5 through 21:
 - Empower families to get involved in their child’s case by completing the **Sample Letter Requesting an Initial Special Education Evaluation’ (available at www.elc-pa.org)** to start the evaluation process by the child’s public school (school districts need to provide a **Permission to Evaluate – Consent Form** for parents to sign and return for evaluation process to begin).*
 5. Families should know that school districts are required to issue a written **Evaluation Report** within:
 - 60 calendar days (minus the summer months) from when the parent signs the **Permission to Evaluate – Consent Form** for a school-age special education evaluation;
 - 60 calendar days (including the summer months) from when the parent signs the **Permission to Evaluate – Consent Form** for a preschool Early Intervention evaluation; and
 - 45 calendar days from **referral to CHILDLINK or County Office of Mental Health/Mental Retardation** for infant and toddler early intervention evaluation.
- *Please note that a school-age child may not be eligible for special education services, but he or she may still have a right to a **Section 504 Accommodations Plan** from his or her public school if the child has a “physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.” Children with asthma and children with diabetes often have Section 504 Plans in school. For more information about Section 504 Plans (also called Service Agreements in PA), please see www.elc-pa.org.
6. With the parents’ consent, provide medical records documenting diagnosis and/or provide letter to school or early intervention agency explaining how child’s medical diagnosis or diagnoses impacts the child’s ability to learn, when necessary (such as an explanation of why a child needs to take a certain medication during the school day).
 7. Follow up with families to make sure they have started the evaluation process!

List of Advocacy and Parent Support Resources in Pennsylvania

Organization	Number	Website
Statewide		
Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania (DRN)	800-692-7443 (Harrisburg office) 215-238-8070 (Philadelphia office) 412-391-5225 (Pittsburgh office)	www.drnpa.org Statewide organization which advocates for Pennsylvanians with disabilities.
PA's Bureau of Special Education ConsultLine	800-879-2301	http://odr-pa.org/consultline/ Toll-free information helpline operated by PA Dep't of Education for parents & advocates of school-aged children with disabilities.
The Arc of Pennsylvania	800-692-7258/ 717-234-2621	www.thearcpa.org The Arc of Pennsylvania focuses on systems advocacy & governmental affairs.
<u>Local chapters:</u>		Local chapters of The Arc focus on providing resources and individual advocacy services for individuals with disabilities and their families.
<i>The Arc of Chester County</i>	610-696-8090	www.arcofchestercounty.org
<i>The Arc of Delaware County</i>	610-544-6600	http://thearcofdelco.org
<i>The Arc of Montgomery, Berks and Bucks Counties</i>	610-603-0227/ 610-265-4700	www.marcpa.org
<i>The Arc of Philadelphia</i>	215-229-4550	www.arcpddc.org
Regional		
Parent Education Network (Eastern PA)	800-522-5827/800-411-5028 (spanish)	www.parentednet.org Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) funded by U.S. Dep't of Education that helps families understand their rights & responsibilities under special education law.
Parent Education & Advocacy Leadership (PEAL) Center (Western & Central PA)	866-950-1040	http://pealcenter.org Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) funded by U.S. Dep't of Education that helps families understand their rights & responsibilities under special education law.

List of Advocacy and Parent Support Resources in Pennsylvania

Regional (Cont.)		
Hispanics United for Exceptional Children (HUNE, Inc.) (Philadelphia)	215-425-5112 (Special Education Helpline) 215-425-6203 (General Contact Number)	www.huneinc.org Provides free bilingual English and Spanish training, technical assistance & individual assistance to parents of infants, toddlers, children, & youth with disabilities and to professionals who work with children.
Parents Involved Network of Philadelphia (PIN)	267-507-3860	http://dbhids.org/parents-involved-network Provides support and advocacy to parents of children who: have emotional or behavioral disorders; are receiving mental health services; are receiving special education services; and are in the juvenile justice system.
Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia (PILCOP)	215-627-7100	www.pilcop.org Provides legal representation to parents of students with disabilities primarily in the Philadelphia region, and technical assistance to attorneys and advocacy organizations around the country.
Vision for EQuality (Philadelphia)	215-923-3349	www.visionforequality.org Assists & empowers people with disabilities & their families to seek quality and satisfaction in their lives as well as equal access to supports and services.
Non- Profit organizations with useful websites/information		
Community Advocacy Project 4 Kids		www.Cap4kids.org/Philadelphia
Education Law Center-PA, Philadelphia		www.elc-pa.org
National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities		http://nichcy.org/

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